

LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND USE AMONG THE GERMAN MINORITY IN
POLAND

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The German minority in Poland has a special history that includes many changes, many difficulties, but also many victories. To further understand this group of people, their background, and their use of the German language, this study first examines the multiple population shifts among the German minority population in Poland. After reviewing the available scholarship, this study seeks to add more detailed information about German language use among the German minority population after 2005, including current efforts to preserve its German cultural heritage. A survey was distributed to 46 different German minority clubs and organizations in the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship, the two areas in Poland most heavily populated by members of the German minority. With 34 respondents, the survey revealed what contact the population has with the German language, their attitudes towards it, and the presence of the German language in Polish schools. The general trend is that German is first seen as a way to further career possibilities, then as an identity marker. The attitude towards the German language is slowly improving, and its presence is slowly increasing in Polish schools. Analysis of these findings reveals that the population is likely to continue emphasizing the learning of German as a way to better their lives, and the younger generations seem to be more interested and willing to participate in German minority events. The study also highlights where future investigation of Poland's German minority is needed, such as individual case studies, closer examination of specific towns, or a comparative analysis of Poland's German minority and minority populations in other locations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The German minority in Poland has a special history that includes many changes and many difficulties, but also many victories. To further understand this group of people, their background, and their use of the German language, I decided to research their history and what they have done to preserve their cultural heritage. While there was already much written about the history of the population, there seemed to be a pause in published research after 2005 and a lack of research on language use. For this reason and to add to the available information about the German minority in Poland, this study seeks to find out what contact the population has with the German language, what the attitudes in Poland were and are towards the German language, and how present the German language is in Polish schools.

By investigating these three questions, I hope to supplement already available research with information on language use among the population after 2005. By completing this timeline of research, any further researchers interested in the topic would be able to reference this work. In addition, the German minority in Poland could also use this research as a self-assessment of their efforts towards furthering their cultural heritage. The results of this research can be used to forecast what the future may look like for the population, and whether they are likely or unlikely to continue learning German, using German, and having the German language be part of their identity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 General sociolinguistic theory

To understand the German minority population in Poland, it is first necessary to understand sociolinguistic theory and minority language theory. The field of sociolinguistics has many subcategories, but there are a few specific theories that are especially applicable to the context of the German minority in Poland. One of these perspectives is language in identity, that is, the extent to which the language spoken in a specific area influences who one is. Two other important aspects are language of and in education, and bilingualism. In addition, sociolinguistics and the law play an important role in determining what steps the minority population is taking to preserve the existence of their population.

The language that a population speaks plays a crucial role in that population's identity. A person's identity starts at the very beginning of life with a name. This name could be a Germanic name, a Slavic name, a biblical name, or any other type of name; any sort of name automatically assigns an identity to a person. What is important, though, is that after being born and being given a name, identity constantly changes throughout life (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). An example of this is being able to tell if someone is a foreigner or has foreign roots just by looking at or hearing their name. In order to change constantly, a person's identity then goes through a never-ending process of influences. Some ways that language influences identity is through language laws in a place, group identification through language differences, and boundaries based on

languages. Examples include the official language of a country, slang spoken in groups of friends, and different dialects being spoken in different areas of a country. In Europe specifically, there are many exceptions to the rules given the countries' close geographical location to one another, resulting in the people and their languages having a high amount of contact. This results in a multitude of dialects, various mixed identities, and also mixtures between different types of identities to form other individual identities, such as citizenship identity, national identity, and language use identity (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). If we examine the dialogue of sociolinguistics of identity more closely, we can find two leading theories.

These two leading theories, one by Howard Giles (1979) and one by Robert Le Page (1985), attempt to explain to what extent belonging to a group is a matter of choice and what the conditions are for being a member of a linguistically defined group. Giles' accommodation theory states that people change their speech patterns when interacting with others in order to accommodate them (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). This shows the importance of language in identity, as a language can be the sole distinguishing factor between two people or groups. In addition, this theory assumes that a group is already there and a member of that group changes language based on group membership. Le Page also has a theory about language and group belonging. Le Page states that a member of a group defines his own speech, and thus creates language groups. This way, a language group does not need to be the precursor to language changes, such as is the case with Giles' theory (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). Moving away from theory, two observations should be evident. One important point in sociolinguistics and identity is that "the language someone speaks functions as a behavioral attribute by any of its

elements.” Also important is that “language supplies the terms by which identities are expressed” (Tabouret-Keller, 1997, p. 324). In this way we can see that language serves two purposes; on the social level as “an element of social integration” and on the individual level “as a catalyst of associative processes” (Tabouret-Keller, 1997, p. 325). Being part of these linguistic groups, however, is not something that comes immediately, and there must be either pre-existing groups or the opportunity to form groups in order for these phenomena to occur. A perfect place for this to occur is in an educational setting, where groups of children are beginning to define their future.

2.2 Language in education

Sociolinguistic principles often manifest themselves in an educational setting. Language plays an important role in education because language and thought complement each other. Language helps to build thought, while thought also helps to build language; the two go hand-in-hand. Verhoeven (1997) says, “thinking would not exist without language. On the other hand, communication would be meaningless in the absence of thinking” (p. 390). In terms of education, sociolinguistic theory is important because of the way one learns about his environment and what goes on around him. Since contact with language plays such a large role in one’s identity and future, the contact with language that one has at home and at school while growing up is essential. Specifically at school, one learns about a variety of different values and beliefs, and what types of language go along with each value and belief (Verhoeven, 1997). This is not to say that home language acquisition is useless. Indeed in a way it is more important as it shows that one can value one opinion more than another, as a child often emulates the values of his or her parents (Verhoeven, 1997). At school, more emphasis should be on

the ability to recognize a variety of opinions and then come up with one's own conclusion. This process involves language because of the thoughts available to a child in one language as opposed to the other, and how "language and thinking are so closely connected that it is hard to discuss one without the other" (Verhoeven, 1997, p. 390). Take for example the German word *Schadenfreude*, which means "pleasure from someone else's sorrows." While this definition exists in English but not a specific word for it, the fact that a specific word for it does exist in German does not make the thought impossible in English, but rather makes the thought easier when thinking in German rather than in English.

The role of education in learning a second language has gone through a series of changes. As opposed to everyday complete immersion used to learn a first language, the communicative approach of learning is the most preferred for learning a second language. This approach gives the learner a chance to use the language in a meaningful way and create new thoughts, thus forming the neural network at the core of language knowledge. This is opposed to the older direct translation approach or audio-lingual methods, where the learner had no need to come up with original ideas, but rather had a language model and learned by repeating what was heard multiple times. In addition to creating original thoughts, the communicative approach allows the learner to be an active member in social contexts by communicating, which gives the learner far greater incentive to learn (Verhoeven, 1997). By learning through language, one can learn more and thus build up an identity. In addition, the more one learns in a language, the more he is able to build new concepts and become self-reliant to form original thoughts about life (Verhoeven, 1997). This shows the importance of language of instruction in school. If knowledge of

life is learned at home in Polish, identifying in school as a German in the German minority population becomes much harder.

The language of instruction also instructs the learner as to what status a language plays in society. For example, if we take a closer look at the schools in the area where the German minority lives in Poland, we will see that the majority of instruction is given in Polish, with bilingual instruction only sometimes offered as an option. This has the potential to inadvertently put the German language at a lower level and discourage the students from learning German. If this is not the case, at the very least this shows the students how language is related to social status (Verhoeven, 1997). Minority languages are applicable here because minority populations will often speak a different language at home and at school, and the differing uses of and emphasis on the different language can become confusing. Minority language theory will be discussed more closely in a later section. Where minority language often emerges in an educational setting is in political debates, where a bilingual offering will either be encouraged or discouraged, often depending on tolerance of minority populations (Verhoeven, 1997). Bilingual options in a school setting can have strong effects on a student's future.

By offering a bilingual option, schools provide worthwhile opportunities to both their majority and minority populations, as bilingualism is a valued quality in today's world. As such, the advantages of being bilingual are plenty. While there are many different aims to offering bilingual education, the advantages, or the real outcomes of offering bilingual education, are most important. Being bilingual helps develop creativity and original thought patterns (García, 1997). It can also help alleviate tensions between different groups. In order to attain the status of being bilingual, either in a sense that the

first language (L1) and the second language (L2) are equally strong or in the situation of L1 supplementation by L2 fluency, there must be a mixture of both the L1 and the L2, which often inherently also means a mixture of different cultures. This tendency of intercultural awareness not only helps to improve the quality of bilingual education, but also helps attain better understanding between different language groups, and thus lessens inequality, racism, and tensions between those groups (García, 1997). In addition, bilingual education gives more opportunities for those who need it to succeed in life, as it reduces the likelihood of suffering from low self-esteem due to language barriers (García, 1997). These are all strong advantages to having bilingual schooling, but in order to maximize the advantages of such programs, there are specific patterns that should be followed.

There are certain principles that maximize the positive effects of bilingual schooling, many of which include the curriculum and how it is delivered. To begin, research has shown that it is best when the student knows which language serves which role in society (García, 1997). That is, it is most advantageous to the student to know which language has the higher level of prestige, or the higher level of respect compared to other languages spoken in the same region, and the ways and situations in which the languages should be used. According to García (1997), in order for bilingual students to separate the languages, the two should be separated depending on the setting. This separation could be by teacher, time of day, or even based on location. Important here is that the students do not learn a single language that is comprised of parts of two different languages, but instead learns two separate languages. Being surrounded by bilingualism on a daily basis in multiple settings greatly helps the students.

To attain a truly bilingual atmosphere, “the entire school system must be designed to promote bilingualism for all, multilingualism for some, monolingualism for none” (García, 1997, p. 419). This means that “administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and clerical and custodial staff must be bilingual or willing to work toward becoming bilingual” (García, 1997, p. 418). This creates an openly bilingual atmosphere that encourages bilingualism and gives students no chance to see any problems with being bilingual. With good bilingual role models, the students too can achieve great success and enjoy being bilingual instead of focusing on the difficulties. A newer model of bilingual education “allows code-switching, claiming that flexible transfer between languages is necessary for effective learning... In this context, it was claimed that for bilinguals and multilinguals, languages are not discrete, but form an integrated language system” (Schwartz, 2014, p. 23). For this reason, teachers can choose to switch between languages. In another model, “teachers who are bilingual should, whenever possible, teach only in one language or teach only one language and they should have native or high levels of linguistic competence in the language in which they teach or that they teach” (García, 1997, p. 418). This will again help avoid confusion and mixing of the languages for the students. Yet another group of people who needs to be involved in bilingual education to best attain success is the parents (García, 1997). They should be supportive, well informed of the school’s bilingual setup, and actively involved in encouraging bilingualism in their child’s education. With a wealth of support from other members of the bilingual community, speaking two languages should be the norm and not the exception. When this can be achieved, the efforts put into a bilingual education can be very effective. However, while bilingual education is an ideal situation for

someone to achieve high proficiency in both their native language and second language, unfortunately bilingual educational opportunities are not widely offered.

2.3 Multilingualism

Multilingual situations arise under various conditions. Migration, changing borders, and the spread of languages are some of the most apparent, but there is a wide variety of other causes, such as personal interest in another language, laws, marriage, and work. With multilingualism there are, as always, two different approaches. On the one hand, it is possible to measure how well the speaker knows each language, and why that language is stronger or weaker than the others. On the other hand, it is also possible to measure the loss of a language, and reasons for and mechanisms by which it happens (Clyne, 1997). To do this, researching language retention goes a long way. This fits closely to the study of Poland's German minority population because of the importance of understanding the presence of the German language.

To understand how the German language is retained in the minority population, we can look at parents' and children's speech patterns and compare them to the German speakers in Germany, Austria, or any other German-speaking country. Seeing which aspects of the language have been kept and which parts have been lost can help to show the evolution of German in the population. Likewise, by identifying which aspects of the language stay with minority populations through the generations, we can get a better idea as to what role the language plays in the identity of the minority population.

There are multiple models of multilingualism. In the symmetrical model, all languages spoken by a speaker have equal status. In the asymmetrical model, one of the speaker's languages has a higher status than the rest (Clyne, 1997). This asymmetrical

model is often seen in minority populations, as each language serves a different function in a person's life. No matter which model is present, there is a certain degree of strategy in deciding which approach to take towards multilingualism. For language planning, there are social, cultural, political, and economic forces that influence language policy (Clyne, 1997). In addition to all of these factors, the size of a community of speakers tends to have a great impact on language maintenance, with larger communities making more effort to maintain their language (Clyne, 1997). This is often because of a higher sense of identity among the community members and a larger number of people who could possibly work together for a common goal. This presents multiple challenges in regards to both language choice and the legal perspective of language.

Some issues that arise when studying multilingualism are how bilinguals know where and when to speak each language, how to separate the languages, and how to preserve knowledge of all languages spoken. There are many different cues that tell someone which language to speak. For example, whether a situation is more public or private, where something or someone is, and the presence of certain members of a group who is identified as a speaker of a certain language can all be automatic markers of which language should be spoken (Clyne, 1997). Bilinguals will often take advantage of their knowledge of multiple languages and mix them based on which structure is most convenient at the time of speaking. Some topics they will talk about in one language, whereas other topics will be in another language. This switch in languages can even be within the same sentence, causing grammatical and structural difficulties (Clyne, 1997). Known as code-switching, this can be beneficial if the two parties of the conversation know the same languages, and is one way in which a bilingual combines the grammars of

two languages. The case of minority languages has its own additional difficulties on top of the normal ones that come with being bilingual. A full discussion of this can be found later in this paper, but law also influences language in its own ways.

2.4 Legal influence

Historically, law has had a strong influence on which languages survive and which die out. For example, some countries have an official language while others do not. In such a situation, the law tells the citizens which language they need to speak depending on the situation. Of course there are always exceptions to the rule, in this case people who do not speak the official language, but in general, this is an effective way to keep one language as the most powerful language in a country. Laws can also be passed to outlaw use of a certain language, thus hurting that language's chances for survival. This has happened at many points in history. Whether for or against certain languages, a reason for language laws is to make sure that the issue of language is addressed, and it is especially manifested in the schooling system, with influence on children being the way to influence the future. Positively speaking, to make sure that no one is treated unfairly, it is important that those who do not speak the language of the country are offered a bilingual education program. Without such an option, non-native speakers are sure "to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful" (Finegan, 1997, p. 426). A law is a way to make sure that this emphasis on inclusion is not forgotten.

Law in language extends to far more situations than just the school setting. In the judicial system, it is important for someone to understand what charges are brought against them and to be able to defend in a native language. Just as with the education

setting, this right might be defended by a law. Similarly, in order to assure democratic voting, it might be necessary to include multiple languages on a voting ballot. This could be done either by having multi-language ballots or by having multiple versions of a ballot, all in different languages. No matter what the case may be, language plays a crucial part in this democratic right and use of a native language should be guaranteed by law (Finegan, 1997). While laws may be needed to ensure linguistic equality in certain situations, minority language theory also helps understand the situation of the German language in Poland.

2.5 Minority language theory

Sociolinguistic theory closely relates to minority language theory, with the common factors being language, a region, and a people. As such, minority language theory includes much about education, multilingualism, and laws and policies. This section will specifically cover language maintenance, language planning, and language shift. These three topics are essential to minority populations because they show specific patterns that happen to language within those populations. Likewise, these three ideas are related to minority language because they all address the actions people take to preserve their heritage and what affects those efforts have.

To begin, language maintenance is sometimes needed in order to make sure that a language does not go extinct or lose its meaning and form in a specific population. Language maintenance can be defined as “the process of consciously maintaining – if necessary by government intervention – a particular form of a language in a population where there is linguistic diversity wide enough to make communication difficult; it is usually bilingual situations that are involved” (Milroy, 1997, p. 52). Something that

helps in the process of language maintenance is when there is a standardized language norm. Although no language can be completely standardized unless it is a dead language, a high level of standardization gives a goal to work towards for populations that need to use maintenance. In the case of minority populations, this type of program is mostly seen as bilingual education. With bilingual education, a student can speak the minority language at school, and thus maintain it, while speaking the majority language outside of school. Along with language classes, learning about culture that goes with the language helps make the knowledge more concrete (García, 1997). By coupling language and culture, the learner is able to not only speak the language better, but also to better understand the significance of certain words and phrases, thus better absorbing the corresponding identity. However, language maintenance would not be as effective if language planning were not involved in the process of making sure a language survives into the future.

Language planning is a way to influence the future of a language, and includes strategy, economics, politics, and an array of other factors. In a way, it is a “tension between tradition and modernity” (Fishman, 1997, p. 355). Fishman points out an important principle, which is that language planning has to do with the way a language will change, and has a goal of making sure that it does not stay unchanged forever. The process of language planning starts with an analysis of the current state of a language (Daoust 1997), with standardization being one of the further steps. Without a standard national version of a language, planning for that language is a much more difficult task than if a standard variant were defined. From there, goals are set to show where the language and the group of speakers should be in a certain point in the future. The goals

can have many different ideas behind them, from easier integration with other countries, to easier trade opportunities, and even to increasing the status of a specific group.

Additionally, laws can be created, or purposely not passed in order to support multilingualism. By encouraging freedom of language learning, this can empower many different populations within a space. Similarly, such a situation can guarantee the right to use multiple languages in official situations, thus supporting multilingualism (Daoust, 1997). This encouraged multilingualism can help assimilate the minority population, but it can also go too far and become repressive. While a national language is a language that is local to a place and is spoken by the majority, an official language is one that is recognized as being the normal and correct language to speak by the majority of the people (Daoust, 1997), and is usually the language of the law. Although national languages are recognized in order to strengthen the language, when these two collide, it could become frowned upon to speak a non-official language, especially based on certain populations within that space (Daoust, 1997). Adopting a language that is not native to a place can show language planning's function of internationalization. This is often the case with English, as it automatically opens up opportunities for international business, thus highlighting economic considerations in language planning. The remaining question is who makes these decisions? In most countries there is some sort of language commission which makes decisions on language usage within a country's borders, however specifically influential individuals can also make an impact, such as the Grimm brothers in the standardization of German who compiled a comprehensive dictionary of the German language and wrote down folk stories. While language planning seeks to

change attitudes and behaviors related to language, it is usually the attitudes that have the strongest influence.

With such a strong influence on language usage, attitudes sometimes lead to language shift instead of preservation. Language shift is when one language replaces another in the same population in the same place. This transition is a process that often takes place in minority populations, but also in other situations as well. With minority populations, bilingualism is very important. It is the main way that the minority population can both maintain its original identity and at the same time fit in to the new place. Because of this, the new language, or the national language of the place where a population is a minority will often overpower the minority language. This unstable bilingualism, a situation that occurs when the national language becomes stronger and more common and useful to the minority population in a bilingual setting, often leads to language shift, which usually takes three generations (Brenzinger, 1997). Despite the efforts of language maintenance and language planning, language shift is a constant threat to the speakers of a language. Especially in a minority population, this is a constant struggle, which unfortunately often comes down to financial considerations; adequate levels of funding for language maintenance and planning can often prevent language shift, but once that funding is diminished, language shift is imminent. All of these sociolinguistic elements can be found in the German minority in Poland. Taking a closer look at the population's history helps to get an idea of how the current state of the German language in Poland came to be. Furthermore, understanding sociolinguistic theory proves to be a great help in making sense of their presence in Poland and what they are doing to preserve their language and cultural heritage.

2.6 History of German minority in Poland

The history of the German minority in Silesia, located near the border between Germany and Poland, is a complicated one. The eastern border of Germany and the western border of Poland have changed throughout history, with the result being the development of a German minority population in the area of current day southwestern Poland. Just as the size of this population has fluctuated, so has the presence and role of the German language. While the politics of changing borders and government styles has had a strong influence, sociocultural theory has its own explanation for the changes.

Silesia is of specific interest as it is an area that has most recently been transferred from Germany to Poland after World War I. Silesia has multiple different groups who have identified as belonging to the German minority. One of these groups consists of the natives of the area, known as “autochthons,” who are actually ethnic Poles who have been germanized through the history of the region. The other group is made up of the ethnic Germans who had been living there as Germans on German soil (Cordell, 2005). While both of these groups belong to the German minority, this difference changed the future of each of the groups after World War II.

After WWII, the ethnic Germans were forced to leave in a mass-expulsion, which resulted in the great majority migrating back to Germany, if they survived the journey. This expulsion in the late 1940s managed to remove 3.2 million Germans from Poland by 1950 (Wicherkiewicz, 1996), both by putting them through concentration camps and by expelling them (Cordell, 2005). The remaining 160,000 ethnic Germans consisted of mostly skilled workers, their family members, and others still needed by the Polish state. The combination of these remaining Germans and the 1.1 million natives of the area

totaled about 1.3 million members of the German minority in Poland (Wicherkiewicz, 1996), a considerable number considering that in 1950 there were around 25 million inhabitants. To make demographic changes among the natives of the area, Poland pushed through a strong “repolonization” program that included outlawing the German language (Cordell, 2009).

Shortly thereafter in the 1950s, Poland forced upon the remaining ethnic Germans the Polish Citizenship Law of 1951, which began the “lost generation of the German minority” (Cordell, 2005, p. 265). The results of this law were twofold. The remaining ethnic Germans did not want this and resisted going through with any documentation. As a result, they isolated themselves, and so created a lost generation (Cordell, 2005). On the other hand, this marked the official recognition of a minority group in Poland, leading to equal rights as all other minorities in 1956 (Cordell, 2009). This combination led to the creation of German language newspapers and libraries, German schools, and even German cultural organizations (Cordell, 2005). However, this official school system only lasted until 1963 and was only meant for the ethnic Germans. For the native population, or Germanized Poles, “teaching of the German language in any form was totally banned until the 1980s” (Wicherkiewicz, 1996, p. 33).

Through the 60s and into the 70s there were no remarkable occurrences that took place with the German minority population in Poland. In this time, the German minority in Poland became a popular topic in West German-Polish relations, with West German hopes of Poland reforming the emigration regulations of the German minority (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991). Unfortunately, because of a lack of legal means, through this time the West German politicians could only “berate their Polish counterparts over the

treatment of the minority, and lobby the Red Cross and other charitable agencies” (Cordell, 2009, p. 11). However, this changed in 1970 when diplomatic relations were established between West Germany and Poland after a visit to Warsaw from West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. This creation of diplomatic relations came with German loans and spurred a rise in emigration to West Germany, much of which was in the form of family reunification and family reunion efforts. After this dark time of Polish-German relations concerning Poland’s German minority, the situation began to slowly improve in the end of the 1970s and into the 80s.

The 80s were an important time for the minority population. During this time there was both another massive wave of emigration and an increase of German identity in the minority. A large part of this had to do with the increased emphasis put on Poland’s German minority rights by West Germany (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991). The strengthening of the German identity among the German minority group began to have results in the 80s. With the goal of facilitating departure to Germany, many *deutsche Freundeskreise* (DFKs), or German Friendship Circles, were set up in the mid 1980s (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991). Although these were generally unofficial, this was a strong beginning to achievement of West Germany’s goal, which was not to bring all German minorities back to Germany, but rather “to ensure that they could retain their German identity and cultivate the German language, culture, and traditions” in Poland (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991, p. 80). This new emphasis on retention of the German identity also led to the minority’s position as a bridge between Germany and Poland to help promote economic recovery in Poland (Cordell, 2005). The peak of this happened in 1989 when German Chancellor Helmut Kohl signed an agreement with Poland that declared that the minority

populations in both Germany and Poland “should be given the possibility of retaining and developing their cultural identity... Soon after this declaration, a number of German socio-cultural societies were officially registered in Poland,” thus marking the beginning of official minority status for all German minority populations in Poland (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991, p. 81).

The year 1989 was a monumental year not just for Germany and Poland, but also for the world as a whole. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of a new political landscape in both Germany and Poland created some difficulties for the minority population in the 90s. German reunification meant a decrease in support from Germany for Poland’s German minority, including the population who had resettled in Germany. For the resettled, this meant elimination of rent subsidies, deterioration of integration efforts, and reform of German citizenship law. To ensure transparency, a fixed integration allowance was given to those in Germany, but the importance of reunification efforts was a more imperative issue than the needs of the minority who resettled to Germany (Trzcielinska-Polus, 1991). As for those in post-communist Poland, the beginning of this new age meant an official standing of the German minority in Polish politics and an overall increase in representation, although this increased influence did not last.

This sudden increase in energy and possibilities for the German minority led to political triumphs. The minority “secured representation in the Senate elections of 1990 and in the Sejm [Parliament] election of [1991]” (Fleming, 2002, p. 533). While this is a victory and a sign of forward progress in minority rights, it unfortunately did not last. Since 1991, the number of votes for the German minority has steadily declined, and

likewise has its presence in the Parliament and Senate. Part of this downfall has been on account of the discovery of labor migration to Germany, as opposed to permanent migration. The wages in Germany were better than those in Poland and as Henryk Kroll, a former German minority Member of Parliament stated, “[labor migration] is not good, but it is better if they have work in Germany, than if they would be unemployed in Poland” (Fleming, 2003, p. 398). In addition to these political difficulties and triumphs for the minority, the ever increasing urge to learn English in Poland proved to be a challenge for the German language among the minority, “since English has become the *lingua franca* of business and, in the Polish context, of upward mobility” (Fleming, 2003, p. 399).

By requiring obedience to more stringent minority policy, the Council of Europe began to influence Poland’s minority group policies when Poland became a member in 1991. The next important event came in 2004 when Poland became a member of the European Union (EU). Along with EU accession came a multitude of laws, codes, and other legal frameworks connected with minority population protection. Remembering that the EU is such a strong supporter of human rights, joining the EU and being influenced by its multitude of human rights laws was evidence of progress towards equality. Even with support from the EU, the German minority in Poland has many challenges and continues to face a decreasing population because of a large number of the population in the older age group more closely identifying with the German minority identity.

While there is no definite answer to how this decrease could be reversed, there are some efforts being made to include the younger population in the German minority

identity, which is something to be discussed later. Politically speaking, Michael Fleming suggests the minority leadership to reconnect with its constituents through getting rid of identity politics and promoting the uniqueness of Opole Silesia to ensure benefits for the region (Fleming, 2003). This may be a viable solution, as nothing can be accomplished without a sound infrastructure to build upon. While this is the current state of the German minority population in Poland, the history still plays an important role. This, combined with general sociolinguistic theory for language and general minority language theory can give a closer understanding of the uniqueness of the population.

All of these sociolinguistic elements manifest themselves in the German minority in Poland, including the history. This population's identity, education, and both German and Polish laws are influenced by their location in Poland. Minority language theory highlights the possible linguistic wins and losses the population can make while trying to hold on to its identity and language. Applying these concepts to the German minority population in Poland is the next step towards understanding what it is that they are doing to remain the German minority population instead of gradually becoming Poles. The population's current state, along with its challenges and triumphs, official rights, and location, has proven to be a successful place for language maintenance, but we will see if the situation continues in this direction.

2.7 Rights and privileges

After examining the background information about sociolinguistics, minority language theory, and the German minority in Poland, we can address the topic of the population today. What sort of rights and privileges do they have, and how did they get

there? What are their challenges and triumphs? Also, where is the German minority in Poland located?

The rights and privileges of the German minority in Poland did not come automatically because of their being there. The process that the population has gone through to get to where it is today has been a long one, one that is closely related to its history. From a legal perspective, there are many different laws that guarantee the population certain rights. However, just because there are laws doesn't necessarily mean that they will be followed. As such, the laws that seek to guarantee minority rights are not always as effective as hoped. After a change in European borders after World War II, Poland and the Germans residing there experienced much political action. While some of this political action was positive and some was negative, the focus of this section is on the population's rights. As a result, the policies that are in place to guarantee the population's rights will be highlighted. The most important events for the German minority population rights in Poland, after declaration of official Polish borders are located in *Table 2.1*.

Table 2.1: Important events leading to German minority rights in Poland

Date	Event / Institution
15 February 1962	Polish Law on Nationality
1966	Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
1975	Helsinki Final Act
1975	Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe
1989	Polish Parliament Commission on National and Ethnic Minorities
1989 - present	Polish Ministry of Culture
Throughout the 1990s	Polish bilateral treaties with other countries

Table 2.1 (cont.)

17 June 1991	Treaty of Good Neighborliness
1992	Decree of the Polish Ministry of National Education
28 May 1993	Parliamentary Election Law
1994	NATO Partnership for Peace Document
1997	Constitution of the Republic of Poland
1998, ratified by 2000 in Poland	Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
1998	Polish Penal Code
2003 (ratified in 2009)	European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages
2005	Poland's National Minorities Law

There are certainly many rules, regulations, and other actors that influence the safety and security of the German minority population in Poland. Before discussing rights of the minority, they must first be legally recognized. There are multiple outlets highlighted in this table through which to be guaranteed official recognition as a minority population. Besides general citizen rights and human rights, these various guarantees show that the minority has rights related to education, political presence in Poland, and religion, all of which are important to cultural heritage maintenance. In addition, there are also numerous agreements that guarantee the general right to maintain cultural identity, and even general agreements to closely follow all agreements. With such a long list of agreements and policies, it seems as if certain rights as a minority in Poland would be guaranteed and protected. While this may be true in theory, in reality it is not always the case.

Some highlights of these policies include the Polish Ministry of Culture's allocation of funding for national minority initiatives, in place after 1989 (Fleming, 2002). Then in 1991, the Treaty of Good Neighborliness between Poland and Germany

gave the minority a “bridging” function between Germany and Poland, effectively empowering them to encourage good relations between the two countries (Fleming, 2003). The Decree of the Polish Ministry of National Education officially granted the right to teach minority languages in Polish schools in 1992 (Wicherkieciwz, 1996). To further encourage the minority population in Poland to become involved in politics, Poland passed the Parliamentary Election Law in 1993, which lowered the minimum representation threshold for a minority member to enter parliament to less than 5% national vote, which is the national minimum to enter parliament (Fleming, 2002). Poland’s 1997 constitution protects against discrimination and affirms the right of national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, traditions, religion, and language (Fleming, 2002). Furthermore, Poland’s ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2000 elevated the issue of minority rights to a more global scale than just Poland (Fleming, 2003). Finally, the most recent movement came in 2005 when Poland’s National Minorities Law allowed bilingual signs to be erected in places where there is a 20% or more population by national minorities (Fleming, 2003).

In addition to these highlights, there are a few smaller initiatives worth mentioning. The 1962 Polish Law on Nationality provided Polish passports to those who desired to become Polish citizens (Wolff, 2003). Then in 1966, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights acknowledged the idea that national minorities exist (Fleming 2002). The 1975 Helsinki Final Act “focused upon those belonging to a minority being able to enjoy their human rights” (Fleming, 2002, p. 532). Also in 1975, the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe linked minority

rights to foundations of a stable democratic society (Fleming, 2002). Later, the Polish Parliament Commission on National and Ethnic Minorities of 1989 was given the responsibility of drafting law on national and ethnic minorities (Fleming, 2002). Then through the 1990s there were many bilateral treaties between Poland and various countries, all including references to national minorities (Fleming, 2002). In 1994, the NATO Partnership for Peace Document required acknowledgement of the Helsinki Act, thus further enforcing rules of protection (Fleming, 2002). Four years later in 1998 the Polish Penal Code included various articles aiming to protect minorities (Fleming, 2002). Finally, in 2003, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages created easier conditions to preserve German in the long run as a minority language (Wolff, 2003).

2.8 Triumphs and challenges

As a result of these rights and privileges, the German minority population of Poland has managed to have an influence on Poland, albeit rather small. Perhaps the greatest achievement is having had seats in Polish governmental institutions. For example, in 1990 the minority was able to win 28 percent of the seats in the regional parliament in Opole Silesia (Fleming, 2002). That same year, they were able to attain representation in the senate election, and in 1991 in the Sejm election (Fleming, 2002). This presence was maintained throughout the 1990s, and in 2001 the minority had one third of the vote in Opole Silesia and had two seats in parliament (Fleming, 2002). “In 1994 it secured majorities in twenty-six councils, in 1998 in twenty-seven local councils” (Fleming, 2002, p. 538). Clearly the minority has secured political strength both at the local and regional level, but the national level has not been as successful, with a steady

decline after 1990, when they were represented by seven parliament members and one senator (Cordell, 2005). Given their history and projection, it is likely that the population will maintain its position as a regional actor and not make much progress in national elections. Alongside this political representation were various other activities, clubs, and organizations.

Around the same time when the German minority population started gaining political representation in Poland, they also started cultural organizations and clubs. Although the system was already unofficially in place, at this time an official nationwide network of DFKs was created (Cordell, 2009). Today this network still exists and has over 600 chapters (Cordell, 2005). In addition to these clubs, there are dual-language signs, German language offerings in schools, and German newspapers. German language television is broadcast in Poland as well as German language radio. Both the German government and the Polish government have contributed towards these initiatives, although some are either privately funded or run as a business (Cordell, 2009). Furthermore, there are also German magazines, German language scholarly journals, church masses held in German, and other official means put in place to preserve German within the minority population (Cordell, 2005). Finally, there are also numerous German language libraries set up to facilitate the ongoing effort to preserve the German language in Poland, at least partly funded by resettlers' unions that came to be after the period of resettlement (Trzecielińska – Polus, 1991). Nonetheless, there are challenges that hinder progress in maintaining the German identity.

Among the challenges to preserving German among the German minority population in Poland is the issue of identity. In order to preserve the German language,

conscious efforts must be made. While some of these efforts can be speaking German as much as possible with as many people as possible, other efforts must also be made in order to ensure success. The unfortunate reality is that funding must be made available to support language learning. The dwindling of funds allocated to German language programs presents the minority with one difficulty (Fleming, 2002). Another difficulty related to languages is that the younger generations are now learning English as much as possible. This is because of business opportunities and the status of English as an international *lingua franca*, thus ensuring upward mobility for English learners (Fleming, 2003). While this doesn't necessarily mean that adolescents are not learning German, it does mean, at the very least, that efforts that could previously be dedicated solely to learning German must now be divided between learning German and learning English. Those who learn German at home can be called "heritage learners," that is, they are raised with two languages, "with the majority language typically becoming dominant in late childhood/early adolescence" (Dąbrowska, 2013, p. 197). As a result, they may not obtain enough input in the L1 and "the heritage language remains fragile and susceptible to attrition, and linguistic performance is slower, more effortful, and more prone to error" (Dąbrowska, 2013, p. 197). This, coupled with the fact that German already lost many speakers when outlawed in the Soviet Union, means that the German language is behind in popularity. In fact, by the 1970s, Polish had already replaced German in the minority population as the *lingua franca* (Cordell, 2005). This created a generation of German Poles that had much less contact with German than their parents and grandparents.

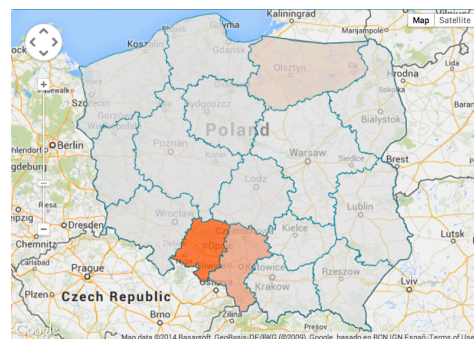
This disconnect between the older and younger generations is yet another difficulty in German language preservation. The older generation is struggling to make

itself relevant to the younger generation (Fleming, 2003). Possible results of this could be inconsistent voter turnout at regional elections and general apathy during voting time. Related to this is the challenge of Polish electoral reforms, which led to the partition of some areas that tended to have high minority support. Migration away from Poland only adds to this conundrum. Since voting is such an important part in ensuring funding, efforts towards language equality, and minority recognition, this is a notable challenge. Perhaps a final challenge in German language preservation among the German minority group is an ageing population (Cordell, 2005). With a declining population due to various reasons, such as emigration, integration into Poland, and historical reasons, the future of the German minority could look different than it is today. However, it is important to keep in mind all of the institutions that are still in place to keep pushing the German minority in Poland forward. Something that this population has greatly to its advantage is its geographic location.

2.9 Geographic distribution of minority population

Since the German-Polish borders have changed through history, it is natural that this population is concentrated somewhere between Poland and Germany. The German minority population is mainly concentrated in the southwestern part of Poland, most heavily in the Silesian region, not to be confused with the Silesian Voivodeship. While there are multiple Voivodeships (administrative districts) within Silesia, the German minority is most heavily

Figure 2.1: Density map of Poland's German minority



The two areas most heavily populated by German minority members, left – Opole Voivodeship, right – Silesian Voivodeship
(Source: <http://vdg.pl/de/organizations>)

concentrated in two of these, the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship. Out of these two Voivodeships, Opole has a higher concentration of Germans. The Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship are where the focus of my research has taken place. However, the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship border each other, so much of the research overlaps. It is important to point out that there are also other locations within Poland that have remnants of the German minority, but the concentrations are so small that those locations were left out of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research questions

While researching the German minority population in Poland, there was a wealth of information on their history up until the mid-2000s. After that point, the available research started to become less prevalent. In order to investigate the German language, how it is used, and what the attitudes were and are towards German in the German minority population in Poland, the study was guided by the following questions: 1) What kind of contact does the German minority in Poland have with the German language most often, and for what reasons?, 2) What attitudes does the German minority population and the Polish population have towards the German language in Poland?, and 3) What has been and is the presence of the German language in Polish schools among the German minority population? With these three questions, I hope to achieve a general overview of German language usage among the German minority in Poland.

3.2 Instruments

A survey was distributed via email to 46 different DFKs, clubs, and organizations in the Opole Voivodeship. The survey was written using the University of Illinois Webtools Toolbox survey service, and participants took the survey online. The survey should have taken no more than 20 minutes to complete. The survey included twenty questions, which is short enough to reduce participant fatigue, but still contained enough questions to elicit a great amount of data. While many of the survey questions contained overlapping themes, the questions related directly to each research question: eight survey

questions relate directly to language contact, seven relate directly to attitudes, and four relate directly to schooling.

The questions were worded in a neutral way, so as to not prime the participant towards answering in any certain way, and they were all clear and understandable, which helps attain clear, non-ambiguous results. This was especially important in my survey because of the element of identity among the population. With a variety of different goals in each question, this survey consisted of six different types of questions. There were two “rate 1 – 10” questions (questions 9 and 11), with a goal of being able to show strength of opinion. Both of these asked about attitudes towards the German language. There were four “multiple-choice” questions (questions 1, 14, 15, and 16), with a goal of finding which answer fits best. These asked about age and language use. The survey also included four “short answer” questions (questions 2, 3, 4, and 6). These were used to leave the participant the freedom to answer in any way he/she wants, and asked about the participant and how he or she used the language at home and at school. Additionally, there were five “long answer” questions (questions 8, 13, 18, 19, and 20), used for the same reason as the “short answer” questions, but recognized that the participants might need more room for the answer. These asked about all three research questions. There were three more “multiple-choice” questions but with a short answer component (questions 5, 10, and 12). These were used in order for the participant to be able to explain their reasoning on a “multiple-choice” question, and asked about language use and attitudes. Finally, there were two “check all that apply” questions on the survey (questions 7 and 17), which were used to encourage multiple answers out of a selection of answers, rather than just one answer out of that selection of answers. These asked about

learning German. After deciding which questions to use and how to word and format them, the final step was to write the questions and finish building the survey.

Since the target of the survey was the German minority in Poland, all questions were written in both German and Polish. The reason for a bilingual survey was to accommodate all participants in the survey. Since one of the topics in the survey is German language use in the minority population, it was appropriate to write it in both German and Polish, as a monolingual survey could have excluded either Polish speaking members of the German minority population or German speaking members of the population. After completing the survey, distributing the survey was the next step.

Setting targets for distribution was a natural process that happened throughout researching background information on the German minority population in Poland. By identifying the multiple areas with a German minority population, I noticed that some areas have a much stronger presence than others. Considering this, I targeted only the area most heavily populated by the German minority population, the Opole Voivodeship because of the relatively small number of expected participants, and the relatively small number of German minority members outside of Opole Silesia. Distributing the survey to all areas with German minorities would have given diminishing results, and likely would not have yielded any additional survey participants. As such, this survey was conducted with only the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship in mind (because of the close proximity and overlapping jurisdiction of clubs and DFKs), and was marketed and advertised through direct e-mails directly to German minority organizations in the two areas.

3.3 Participants

Since the survey was distributed to the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship, the majority of respondents were from either of these two areas. There were a total of 34 respondents to the survey. Out of these 34 respondents, 29 of them stated that they grew up in either of these two voivodeships, while four grew up in other voivodeships and one simply stated Poland. The most common age of the respondents was 23 years old, answered by five respondents.

Table 3.1: Age of respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents (n=34)
18 - 24	11
25 - 44	15
45 - 64	5
65+	3

As can be seen in *Table 3.1*, 11 of the respondents belonged to the 18 – 24 age group and 15 respondents belonged to the 25 – 44 age group. Five respondents belonged to the 45 – 64 age group, and three respondents belonged to the 65+ age group. While there was a variety of different professions represented by the survey respondents, the two most common were student and teacher; ten respondents identified as students and four identified as teachers. While there was no question on the survey about why the respondents took it, the fact that they took the survey gives an insight that the respondents are interested in preserving their cultural heritage and were willing to take a survey to help further research on the area.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The complete results of the survey reveal some interesting information about the German minority's contact with the German language, attitudes towards the German language in the region, and the presence of the German language in Polish schools.

4.1 Language contact

To begin, the questions related to contact with the German language provide interesting insights. In response to the question (question 4) about which language the respondents spoke at home as a child, 15 spoke German, 21 spoke Polish, and 18 spoke in the *Wasserpolsch* dialect, a regional dialect strongly influenced by both German and Polish. In 16 cases, multiple languages were spoken. Three respondents stated that they spoke only German at home growing up, while ten spoke only Polish and five spoke only dialect, however there was no pattern showing that specific areas were prone to specific home language patterns. After growing up, the usage of German may be a bit different. When asked how often they watch German TV, listen to German radio, and read German magazines and newspapers (questions 14 – 16), the most common activity was watching German TV, which 56% of respondents do every day as can be seen in *Table 4.1*.

Table 4.1: Regularity of watching German TV

Frequency	Percent	Count (n=34)
Daily	56%	19
3+ x / week	21%	7
1 x / week	6%	2
2 x / month	6%	2
1 x / month or less	12%	4

The least common activity was listening to German radio, which over 40% of respondents do less than once per month and 50% of respondents do less than once per week, as can be seen in *Table 4.2*.

Table 4.2: Regularity of listening to German radio

Frequency	Percent	Count (n=34)
Daily	29%	10
3+ x / week	6%	2
1 x / week	15%	5
2 x / month	0%	0
1 x / month	3%	1
1 x / 3 months	0%	0
Less than 1 x / 3 months	38%	13
Never	9%	3

In addition to these activities, the respondents often had contact with the German language at home, at work, and through a combination of various media sources such as TV, radio, and Internet (question 18). 11 respondents used German mostly at home, 11 mostly at work, and another 10 used German through the mentioned media sources. This interaction with the German language compliments the respondents' interaction with the German minority in Poland, where the most commonly mentioned contact to the minority, mentioned by 16 respondents, is through various German minority clubs and organizations (question 19). Equally important to contact with the German language and German minority group is the reason for learning German. Although there are a limitless number of reasons for learning German, the survey was able to identify three main reasons (question 17). As can be seen in *Table 4.3*, work was a leading reason.

Table 4.3: Top three reasons to learn German

Reason	Percent	Count (n=34)
Career possibilities	74%	25
Travel possibilities	32%	11
Personal enjoyment	6%	2
Reading German texts	41%	14
Buying German products	6%	2
German music	6%	2
Meeting new friends	21%	7
Family	53%	18
Research	15%	5
Other	24%	8

As shown in *Table 4.3*, almost 75% of respondents feel that career possibilities is a good reason to learn German. In second place came learning German because of family ties, which 53% chose. One more of the strongest reason to learn German was to read German texts, though exactly what kind of texts was left undefined. The survey questions relating to German language use among the German minority population in Poland were effective at yielding clear and interpretable results. With a good idea of the minority's connection to the German language, we can move on to what attitudes towards the German language are like in Poland.

4.2 Attitudes towards the German language

Moving to questions related to attitudes towards the German language in Poland (question 9), a strong disconnect in attitudes towards the German language between the Polish people and the German minority in Poland exists. In *Table 4.4*, we can see that 85% of the survey respondents said that they felt that the Polish attitude towards the German language was more negative than positive when they were in school.

Table 4.4: Polish attitudes towards the German language when in school

Attitude Rating	Percent	Count (n=34)
1 negative	38%	13
2	12%	4
3	15%	5
4	12%	4
5	9%	3
6	0%	0
7	6%	2
8	6%	2
9	0%	0
10 positive	3%	1

When asked if the Polish attitude has changed since then, 56% of respondents stated that it had not changed (question 10). Out of the 13 respondents who mentioned a change, two mentioned that the changes were small. When asking about the German minority's opinion towards the German language, the results were significantly different (question 11). As can be seen in *Table 4.5*, 79% of respondents stated that their attitude towards the German language was more positive than negative while they were in school.

Table 4.5: German minority attitudes towards the German language when in school

Attitude Rating	Percent	Count (n=33)
1 negative	3%	1
2	0%	0
3	6%	2
4	3%	1
5	6%	2
6	0%	0
7	6%	2
8	6%	2
9	18%	6
10 positive	50%	17

In addition, we can see that the overwhelmingly popular answers were nine and ten, on a scale of one to ten with ten being the most positive attitude towards the German language. 74% of respondents stated that this positive attitude hadn't changed since the time when they were in school (question 12). Out of the eight respondents who answered that the attitude had changed, four stated that there is now more emphasis put on learning German when growing up. There are also other ways in which attitudes towards the German language in Poland can be demonstrated.

The way the Polish people have included themselves in the German minority's efforts to preserve their cultural heritage are one way to show their attitude towards the minority population. In addition, the existence and politics of bilingual signs in the areas most heavily populated with German minorities can also reflect these feelings. Out of all respondents, four said that the Polish people interacted in a positive way with the German minority (question 13). Eight said that the Polish people interacted in a negative way with the German minority, and another 15 said that the Poles were either not involved at all or not involved enough to be worth mentioning. One example of how the Polish people negatively interacted with the German minority is by painting over the bilingual signs put up in the area. Asking about these signs on the survey prompted the respondents to write more about identity and heritage than when answering other questions. Three respondents specifically used the words "identity" or "heritage" and another five respondents used related words such as "history" and "culture". 24 of the survey respondents, or 71%, stated that they had a positive attitude toward the signs written in both Polish and German. The fact that 18 respondents spoke a dialect also

shows the importance of dialect in identity among the population. The attitudes towards the German language in Poland can further be understood by looking at the presence of German in Polish schools.

4.3 German language in Polish schools

Finally, let's examine the questions related to the Polish school system. Out of the 34 respondents, 19 respondents, or 56%, stated that they were required to study German in school (question 5). Out of those who were required to study German in school, the average age was 27, while the average age of those not required to study German in school was 48.

While slightly above half of the respondents were required to learn German in school, a very strong majority stated that Polish was the main language of instruction when they were in school (question 6). In fact, out of the 31 people who responded to this question, 29 had Polish as the single main language. Of the two who had different instruction languages at school, one had both German and Polish as the main language of instruction and one learned in Russian. In the same question, eight respondents did not know what the main language of instruction is today in the schools they went to. Out of the 26 answers given, the number of schools where Polish is the single main language decreased to 23. Two of the rest of the 26 respondents stated that instruction is in both German and Polish, two stated it was only in German, and one stated that it was in English and German. *Table 4.6* shows which language skills were used most in German languages instruction (question 7).

Table 4.6: Language skills used in German language instruction in Polish schools

Language Skill	Percent	Count (n=30)
Reading	44%	15
Writing	50%	17
Listening	32%	11
Speaking	38%	13
No German in school	24%	8

As we can see, reading and writing were the most frequently used language skills in German language instruction in Polish schools. Outside of class, some schools also offer extracurricular activities related to the German language (question 8). Out of the 23 respondents who answered this question, the most common activities were an exchange program, poetry events, and competitions, mentioned by three respondents each. Another five respondents mentioned German language courses offered at school, although this is not necessarily an extracurricular activity. All of these results provide helpful ways to better understand the history of the German minority in Poland and a means to think about their future.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the survey results, we can now interpret what the results mean for the German minority population in Poland. First, what implications do these results have on the population's contact with the German language? Second, how do the changing attitudes towards the German language affect the German minority? Finally, what role does the Polish school system play in the lives of the German minority in Poland? After interpreting these three areas, a general impact can be seen.

5.1 German language contact

A common theme in the results of the respondents' contact with the German language was work, family ties, and German texts as main reasons to learn German, although work was more represented. The overwhelmingly large number of respondents who learn German because of career options shows that German often serves the function of a means of upward mobility. This upward mobility is proven by the survey to be more important than family ties and cultural ties, such as music and texts. While the survey cannot be used to prove what is most important for the German minorities, a stronger correlation between the German language and upward mobility can be seen than between the German language and preservation of cultural heritage.

These data can also be interpreted when looking at the language spoken at home among the German minority population. Seeing as how both Polish and a popular dialect, *Wasserpolnisch*, are spoken at home more often than German, we can see that the presence of the German language is also slowly fading in terms of cultural heritage,

which does not, however, mean that the heritage is being lost, but rather shows that dialect is one means of cultural identity, perhaps even more than German. While career possibilities are a strong reason for the population to learn German, family ties are a less important reason. Combining the lesser importance on learning German for cultural reasons and German being spoken at home less than Polish or dialect being spoken at home, we can conclude that the German language is slowly decreasing in popularity as a native language among the German minority population. However, considering the various clubs and organizations that support learning German in Poland, it is likely that the members of the German minority population will continue learning German as a foreign language in order to make themselves more competitive in the global marketplace. With the clubs and organizations we see language maintenance and an effort to avoid language shift.

5.2 Attitudes towards the German language

When looking at attitudes in Poland towards the German language among the German minority population, the attitude has changed since the respondents were school-aged. This change to put more emphasis on learning German proves that German is still a useful language. Relating back to the contact with the German language, the given attitudes further prove that German can be used as a language of opportunity for the members of the minority population. Along with more and better German language skills come more opportunities for a better career in the future. This is logical considering that Germany is one of the largest economies in all of Europe. However, the results about dual-language signs prove a slightly different idea.

The majority of survey respondents who have positive feelings about the dual-language signs show that although the economic reasons prevail for learning German, the German culture is still seen as something worth preserving. With family and German texts being the second and third most important reason to learn German, this fits with the attitudes towards the bilingual signs. The fact that this prompted respondents to write about identity shows that identity is still an important part of the German minority's life in Poland, although actually being able to speak German is not the most important part of German heritage among the German minority. In addition, we see that in 16 cases, multiple languages were spoken at home. This survey thus shows that multilingualism is a daily reality for a considerable number of members of the German minority population.

5.3 The German language in Polish schools

Results of the presence of the German language in Polish schools reveal a slightly more promising future than the previous results. To begin, the average age for respondents required to learn German in school was much lower than the average age of those not required to learn German in school. This reveals a pattern that aligns with the attitude towards the German language. As the attitude towards the German language slowly improves, the requirement to learn German in school also spreads. This means that the younger generations of the German minority are more likely to learn German than the older generations, resulting in German being more popular in the future. With over half of the respondents saying that they were required to learn German in school, most of which were the younger respondents, it is likely that the future generations will follow the pattern and continue to be required to learn German in school, especially if one of the main reasons to learn German is to get ahead in the job market. Even if the reason

to learn German is for career opportunities and not for preserving their cultural heritage, by knowing German, the minority members will inadvertently be preserving their cultural histories as well.

The respondents stated that the number of schools where Polish is the main language of instruction is decreasing. To make up for this, two additional options were a mixture of German and Polish and a mixture of German and English. This reveals two important language roles. First, that German is becoming more popular as a language of instruction in Polish schools. Given the importance and presence of politics in schooling and the setup of the school system, it is a good sign that German is becoming more popular as a language of instruction. This also proves the improved attitude towards German and the added importance of learning German. This reveals a positive outlook for the future of the German language in Poland. However, the presence of the English language in the Polish school system as a main language of instruction identifies a place where German may need to further prove its value. In a bilingual setting with German and English, maybe this isn't as strong of an issue, but in a setting where the choice is between Polish and English or Polish and German, it might not be so easy. The ever-increasing popularity of English on a global scale has manifested itself in the Polish school system. For the German minority population, this means that they will have to prove that German is as important as English for the future of their livelihood if they want German to continue to be part of their schooling experience. This may seem to be a difficult task, but the overwhelming view of work opportunities as a reason to learn German shows that this thought is already present. With that, the fight against English might not be as strong as it seems, at least not among the German minority population.

In addition, this diversification of main language of instruction will add diversity to the student population, resulting in a better-rounded education. Along with a better-rounded education already come more diverse opportunities, which will be supplemented by German. Although not all students learn German, those who learn German and have a diversified education experience are likely to succeed in creating a positive lifestyle for them selves in the future, which is one of the goals of a bilingual education model.

5.4 Overall impact on the German minority population

The overall outlook for the German minority population in Poland is positive. While the main reason to preserve the German language may not be for cultural reasons or to facilitate family ties, the important result is that the drive is there. By continuing to learn German, the minority population will continue its historical identity, but will also change it. The push for “remaining a German” is not as strong as the push for success. However, along with success also come more possibilities to support organizations that help hold on to the German identity in Poland. Considering that the German language is an important factor in furthering livelihood within the German minority population, part of the German identity will already be there, although German is likely to be used as a foreign language instead of a native language. The effects of language maintenance efforts carried out by various German minority clubs and organizations can thus already be seen.

In addition to already knowing German, the support of the various German cultural organizations will likely provide a way for the German minority to continue along their path of German identity. In addition, the number of respondents whose main contact with the German minority population is through these clubs and organizations

shows their importance. Although the respondents did not mention German identity as a main reason to learn German, the other results prove otherwise. The positive feelings towards bilingual signs and activity in German minority organizations prove that their identity is indeed important. This, coupled with the growing emphasis in the younger generations to learn German, shows a positive outlook for the future of the German minority population. While the difficulties of being a minority population will likely continue, the survey shows proof of desire to hold on to the German cultural heritage among the German minority population.

Yet another positive aspect of this survey is the age of the respondents. 23 of the 34 respondents were under 40 years old. This shows that not only do the survey questions prove a positive outlook for the future of the German minority in Poland, but the age group of the majority of the respondents shows who is most active in the minority population. While the older generations are just as important as the younger generations, the respondents in their 20s and 30s are more likely to have a more active role in the future of the population. Since the younger generations have a longer future ahead of them, they have more potential to make change. The fact that the majority of respondents were in the 20s and 30s age group shows that they are in fact taking advantage of their opportunities and participating in any way possible to positively affect their future.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of my research show a promising outlook for the future of the German minority population in Poland. However, it is important to point out that there are limitations to the applicability of my research. By addressing these limitations and furthering this study, it would then be possible to conduct a more comprehensive study of the German minority population in Poland.

6.1 Limitations

One challenge that heavily influenced my decision in how to approach this research was my location. Not being in Poland to personally meet and interact with the minority population necessitated finding another way to get direct answers from them. I considered interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and questionnaires. Interviews would have been a very reliable method for collecting data, but without physically being in Poland, the challenges outweighed the advantages. The only way to interview them would have been through an Internet video chat platform, which would have been difficult to set up and coordinate. After ruling out interviews, I considered focus groups. The advantage would have been the same as with an interview, with the added benefit of the subjects being able to discuss their answers, thoughts, and feelings. The challenges, as with the interview method, outweighed the benefits. Coordinating an online interview with one person would already have been a great challenge, but a videoconference with multiple people involved would have been much more difficult to coordinate. The next possibility was to observe the participants of my study. Again, the

main hindrance here was that without being in Poland to observe and listen to them, the coordination would be too high of a barrier to obtain results. In addition, this method would benefit from a longitudinal aspect. This time requirement also held me back from using the observation method of obtaining data. The only option left was the questionnaire method. The various locations of the German minority in Poland added additional difficulties in this research.

The largest concentration of members of the German minority in Poland is located in the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship. However, there are other areas of Poland with a German minority population, although the numbers are significantly smaller than in the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship. Because of the small size of the German minority population outside of the two main voivodeships, I decided not to directly market my survey to them. The reason for this was that it would be unlikely to find any participants from those areas, considering the small number of members. However, by advertising the survey to many different German minority organizations, it is possible that these German minority members had access to the survey. The lack of advertisement in the smaller German minority areas could potentially change the results of the survey. Since the population outside of the two main voivodeships is smaller, those members could potentially have different contact with the German language and different attitudes towards it. In addition, they could have different methods of maintaining their cultural heritage.

An additional limitation to my study is the way in which I collected my information. For this study, data collected by personal interviews would have been very helpful in collecting a more substantial amount of data. However, because of my

location, this was not an option. Focus groups to facilitate a discussion with multiple members of the German minority and observations would have added valuable data. By seeing how the German minority members interact with others, I would have collected a more objective data set than what was collected by relying on a survey because it is possible for the participants of a survey to write a more subjective answer. Although I was looking for the population's subjective opinions, additional objective observations could add a wealth of insights about them.

One last limitation to this research is the variety of survey questions. While the survey questions searched for answers to specific research questions, a longer survey or different questions could have given more data to interpret and could reveal other interesting nuances that were not revealed in the current survey.

Although there are a few aspects of the study that held back some data collection, there are other hindrances that could not possibly be changed. One of these is the lack of a single, unified identity within the German minority population in Poland. It is the nature of people for everyone to have an individual identity. If there was just one identity among the minority population, then more absolute answers could be found.

Another inherent limitation to this research is that it would be impossible to contact every single member of the German minority population. This is impossible because of fluctuation in population numbers and the nature of identity among minority population. Identity is constantly changing, as is the size of the population. If every single person could be contacted and studied in depth, the results to this study's research questions would be more complete. By addressing these limitations, research on the German minority population in Poland could be taken further.

6.2 Further research

There are many ways in which this research can be taken further. First, by addressing the limitations of this study, more detailed results could be achieved. Also by researching the population from a specific perspective, a more thorough idea could be formed. In addition, comparing the German minority population in Poland to other minority populations in other places would produce further thoughts about the minority group in Poland. By addressing the limitations of this survey, further research could provide more reliable data about the German minority. Looking at the population through only one specific perspective, such as from a legal perspective, from the perspective of interaction with non-minority members, from the perspective of one specific individual of the minority population, or from a perspective based on a different language could provide further details. Finally, a comparative analysis of Poland's German minority and the minority of a different place could help find solutions to any issues that the German minority population may have. All of these methods of further investigation would prove to be helpful in discovering more about the German minority population in Poland.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

After highlighting the background of the German minority in Poland and reporting the methodology, results, and interpretations of the survey, it is clear that the minority population has an interesting future to come. The fact that the respondents were mostly under 40 years of age shows that the younger generations is active in events involving the German minority. With an increasingly positive attitude towards the German language and career advancement as the main reason to learn German, the younger generations may find fulfilling careers that will better allow them to support German minority clubs and organizations. As a result of supporting these clubs, the German cultural heritage can better survive, since funding is often the deciding factor of whether or not an organization survives. To supplement this research, other areas with a German minority population can be investigated more closely or from one specific perspective. Alternatively, a comparative analysis between the German minority in Poland and another minority population in another place would be a good approach to further research.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM WITH ONLINE SURVEY

German Original

Sie sind eingeladen, an einer Forschungsstudie über die deutsche Sprache in der deutschen Minderheit in Polen teilzunehmen. Diese Studie wird von Dr. Kristina Riedel, Direktorin und Koordinatorin des Programms der Sprachen Afrikas, Linguistik Abteilung; Charles Webster, Direktor des Sprachprogramms der germanischen Sprachen und Literaturen, deutsche Abteilung; und Zachary Grotovsky, MA Kandidat, deutsche Abteilung an der Universität Illinois in Urbana-Champaign durchgeführt.

Diese Studie beansprucht voraussichtlich 15 Minuten Ihrer Zeit. Sie werden darum gebeten, einen Online-Fragebogen über Ihre Erfahrungen mit der deutschen Sprache und Schulbildung in Polen auszufüllen.

Ihre Entscheidung, an der Studie teilzunehmen, oder die Teilnahme abzulehnen, ist freiwillig und Sie haben das Recht, Ihre Teilnahme jederzeit zu kündigen. Sie können alle Fragen, die Sie nicht beantworten wollen, überspringen. Wenn Sie den Fragebogen nicht zum Schluss ausfüllen wollen, schließen Sie einfach Ihren Browser.

Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist vertraulich und die Daten werden in Summe vermittelt. Mögliche Verteilungsmethoden sind u.a. eine schriftliche Masterarbeit. Obwohl Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Forschung Sie nicht unbedingt persönlich begünstigt, hilft sie uns zu verstehen, was die deutsche Minderheit in Polen und andere tun, um ihr kulturelles Erbe zu erhalten.

Es gibt nur geringe Risiken außerhalb denen, die im täglichen existieren, für Personen, die an dieser Umfrage teilnehmen. Dies inkludiert eine persönliche Meinung zu äußern. Um dieses Risiko zu minimieren, kann jede Frage übersprungen werden.

Wenn Sie Fragen zu diesem Projekt haben, können Sie sich mit Dr. Kristina Riedel, +1 217 333 7921, kriedel@illinois.edu in Verbindung setzen. Wenn Sie Fragen über Ihre Rechte als Teilnehmer an dieser Studie oder irgendwelche Sorgen oder Beschwerden haben, kontaktieren Sie bitte die University of Illinois Institutional Review Board unter +1 217 333 2670 (R-Gespräche werden angenommen, wenn Sie sich als Forschungsteilnehmer identifizieren) oder per E-Mail unter irb@illinois.edu.

Bitte drucken Sie eine Kopie dieser Einverständniserklärung für Ihre Unterlagen, wenn Sie so wünschen.

Ich habe die oben erwähnte Einverständniserklärung gelesen und verstanden, und ich bestätige, dass ich mindestens 18 Jahre alt bin, und indem ich auf « submit » klicke, zeige ich meine Bereitschaft, freiwillig an der Studie teilzunehmen.

English Translation

You are invited to participate in a research study on the German language in Poland's German minority population. This study is conducted by Dr. Kristina Riedel, Director and Language Coordinator of Sub-Saharan African Languages, Linguistics Department; Charles Webster, Director of the Basic Language Program of Germanic Languages and Literatures, German department; and Zachary Grotovsky, MA candidate, German department from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.

This study will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. You will be asked to complete an online survey about your experience with the German language and schooling in Poland.

Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to terminate your participation at any time without penalty. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. If you want do not wish to complete this survey just close your browser.

Your participation in this research will be completely confidential and data will be averaged and reported in aggregate. Possible outlets of dissemination may be a master thesis. Although your participation in this research may not benefit you personally, it will help us understand what the German minority in Poland and others are doing to preserve their cultural heritage .

There are only minor risks to individuals participating in this survey beyond those that exist in daily life. This includes expressing a personal opinion. To minimize this risk, any question may be skipped.

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Dr. Kristina Riedel, +1 217 333 7921, kriedel@illinois.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

Please print a copy of this consent form for your records, if you so desire.

I have read and understand the above consent form, I certify that I am 18 years old or older and, by clicking the submit button to enter the survey, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

German / Polish Original

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11) Wie war die Einstellung der deutschen Minderheit zur deutschen Sprache, als Sie in der Schule waren? / Jaki był stosunek niemieckiej mniejszości narodowej do języka niemieckiego, kiedy Pan/Pani chodził(a) do szkoły?

1 negativ / negatywny

5

10 positiv / pozytywny

12) Hat sich die Einstellung der deutschen Minderheit zur deutschen Sprache seit damals geändert? Wenn ja, wie hat sie sich geändert? / Czy stosunek niemieckiej mniejszości narodowej do języka niemieckiego zmienił się od tamtego czasu? Jeśli tak, to jak on się zmienił?

13) Wie hat sich die polnische Bevölkerung an der deutschen Minderheit und ihre Bemühungen, ihr kulturelles Erbe zu erhalten, beteiligt? / Jak polska ludność uczestniczyła w niemieckiej mniejszości narodowej i ich wysiłkach do zachowania dziedzictwa kulturowego?

14) Wie oft schauen Sie deutschsprachiges Fernsehen? / Jak często Pan/Pani ogląda telewizji w języku niemieckim?

jeden Tag / codziennie, 3+ Mal / Woche / 3+ razy / tydzień, 1 Mal / Woche / raz / tydzień, 2 Mal / Monat / 2 razy / miesiąc, 1 Mal / Monat / raz / miesiąc, 1 Mal / 3 Monate / raz / 3 miesiące, weniger als 1 Mal / 3 Monate / mniej niż raz / 3 miesiące, nie / nigdy nie

15) Wie oft hören Sie deutsches Radio? / Jak często Pan/Pani słucha niemieckiego radia? jeden Tag / codziennie, 3+ Mal / Woche / 3+ razy / tydzień, 1 Mal / Woche / raz / tydzień, 2 Mal / Monat / 2 razy / miesiąc, 1 Mal / Monat / raz / miesiąc, 1 Mal / 3 Monate / raz / 3 miesiące, weniger als 1 Mal / 3 Monate / mniej niż raz / 3 miesiące, nie / nigdy nie

16) Wie oft lesen Sie deutschsprachige Zeitungen oder Zeitschriften? / Jak często Pan/Pani czyta niemieckie gazety albo niemieckie magazyny?

jeden Tag / codziennie, 3+ Mal / Woche / 3+ razy / tydzień, 1 Mal / Woche / raz / tydzień, 2 Mal / Monat / 2 razy / miesiąc, 1 Mal / Monat / raz / miesiąc, 1 Mal / 3 Monate / raz / 3 miesiące, weniger als 1 Mal / 3 Monate / mniej niż raz / 3 miesiące, nie / nigdy nie

17) Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die drei größten Vorteile, die deutsche Sprache zu beherrschen? / Według Pana/Pani, jakie są trzy najważniejsze zalety opanowania języka niemieckiego?

Karrieremöglichkeiten / możliwości kariery, Reisemöglichkeiten / możliwości podróżowania, persönliches Vergnügen / osobiste zabawy, deutsche Texte lesen / czytanie niemieckich tekstów, deutsche Produkte kaufen / kupowanie niemieckich produktów, deutsche Musik / niemiecka muzyka, neue Freunde kennenlernen / poznawanie nowych przyjaciół, Familie / rodzina, Forschung / badania

18) Wo haben Sie im Alltag am meisten Kontakt mit der deutschen Sprache? / Gdzie Pan/Pani ma najwięcej kontaktu z językiem niemieckim w życiu codziennym?

19) Welchen Kontakt haben Sie am meisten mit der deutschen Minderheit in Polen? / Jaki rodzaj kontaktu ma Pan/Pani najczęściej z mniejszością niemiecką w Polsce?

20) Welche Meinung haben Sie zu zweisprachigen Schildern? Haben Sie eine positive oder negative Einstellung zu den Schildern? / Jaką Pan/Pani ma opinię w dwujęzycznych znakach? Czy Pan/Pani ma pozytywny czy negatywny stosunek do znaków?

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) In which city did you grow up?
- 3) What is your profession?
- 4) Which language did you speak at home as a child?
- 5) Did you have to learn German in school? If yes, how often did you have German instruction, and for how many years?
- 6) What was the main language of instruction when you were a child? Do you know what it is now? If yes, what is it?
- 7) If you learned German in school, which language competencies did you use most?
reading, writing, listening, speaking, I did not learn German in school
- 8) Do the schools offer extracurricular activities that have to do with the German language? If yes, which types of activities are offered?
- 9) What was the Polish attitude towards the German language when you were in school?
1 negative 5 10 positive
- 10) Has the Polish attitude towards the German language changed since then? If yes, how has it changed?
- 11) What was the German minority's attitude towards the German language when you were in school?
1 negative 5 10 positive
- 12) Has the German minority's attitude towards the German language changed since then? If yes, how has it changed?
- 13) How did the Polish people take part in the German minority and its efforts to preserve its cultural heritage?
- 14) How often do you watch German language TV?
daily, 3x/week, 1x/week, 2x/month, 1x/month, 1x/3 months, less than 1x/3 months, never
- 15) How often do you listen to German radio?
daily, 3x/week, 1x/week, 2x/month, 1x/month, 1x/3 months, less than 1x/3 months, never

- 16) How often do you read German newspapers or magazines?
daily, 3x/week, 1x/week, 2x/month, 1x/month, 1x/3 months, less than 1x/3 months, never
- 17) What, in your opinion, are the three biggest advantages to learning German?
career possibilities, travel opportunities, personal enjoyment, to read German texts, to buy German products, German music, to meet new friends, family, research, other:
- 18) Where do you have the most contact with the German language on a daily basis?
- 19) What kind of contact do you have most often with the German minority in Poland?
- 20) What is your opinion towards dual-language signs? Do you have a positive or negative attitude towards the signs?

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of Vice Chancellor for Research
Institutional Review Board
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820



February 17, 2014

Kristina Riedel
Linguistics

RE: *Language Background and Use Among the German Minority in Poland*
IRB Protocol Number: 14508

EXPIRATION DATE: 02/16/2017

Dear Dr. Riedel:

Thank you for submitting the completed IRB application form for your project entitled *Language Background and Use Among the German Minority in Poland*. Your project was assigned Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Number 14508 and reviewed. It has been determined that the research activities described in this application meet the criteria for exemption at 45CFR46.101(b)(2).

This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted. Please note that additional modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and exemption determination or approval before the modifications are initiated.

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subjects research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our website at <http://www.irb.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rebecca Van Tine'.

Rebecca Van Tine, MS
Assistant Human Subjects Research Specialist, Institutional Review Board

c: Zachary Grotovsky
Charles Webster